

BIOLOGY AND HISTORY

C. W. Salisbury

190

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You will not expect me to insult you this evening with any discussion of the garbage and gossip, records of scoundrels and courts and battles, murder and theft, which we were taught at school under the name of History. If history be, as nearly all historians have conceived it, and as Gibbon defined it, "little more than the register of the crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind," it is an empty and contemptible study, save for the social pathologist. But if history, without by any means ignoring great men or underrating their influence, is, or should be, the record of the past life of mankind, of progress and decadence, the rise and fall of empires and civilisations, and their mutual reactions; if it be the record of the intermittent ascent of man, "sagging but pertinacious"; if this record be subject to the law of causation, and therefore susceptible, in theory at least, of explanation as well as description; if its factors are at work to-day, and will shape the destiny of all the to-morrows; if it be neither phantasmagoria, nor panorama, nor pageant, nor procession, but *process*—in short, an organic drama—then, indeed, it is a supreme study. Especially must it appeal to us, who boast a tradition greater than the world has ever yet seen, and kinship with men who represent the utmost of which the human spirit has yet shown itself capable—who speak the tongue that Shakespeare spake, but to whom the names of all our imperial predecessors, from Babylon to Spain, serve as a perpetual *memento mori*. My special question, this evening, is whether there are inherent and necessary reasons why our predecessors' fate must sooner or later be ours? Must races die?—or, if we are sceptical about races, and more especially about the so-called Anglo-Saxon race, must civilisations, states or nations die?

Nations, races, civilisations rise, we shall all agree, because to inherent virtue of breed they add sound customs and laws, acquirements of discipline and knowledge. But, these acquirements made, power

established, and crescent from year to year—why do they *then* fall? If they can *make* a place for themselves, how much easier should it not be to *maintain* it?

Two explanations, each falsely asserting itself to be rooted in biological fact, have long been cited, and are still cited, in order to account for these supreme tragedies of history.

The first—cited by no less a thinker than Mr. Balfour the other day—may claim Plato and Aristotle as its founders, and consists of an argument from analogy. Races may be conceived in similar terms to individuals. There are many resemblances between a society—a “social organism,” to use Herbert Spencer’s phrase—and an individual organism. Just, then, as the individual is mortal, so is the race. Each has its beginning, its period of youth and growth, its maturity, and finally, its decadence, senility and death. So runs the common argument.

Biology, however, so far from confirming it, declares as the capital fact which contrasts the individual and the race, that whilst the individual is doomed to die from inherent causes, the race is naturally immortal. The tendency of life is not to die, but to live. If individuals die, that is doubtless because more life and fuller is thus attained than if life bodied itself in immortal forms; but the germ-plasm *is* immortal; it has no inherent tendency either to degenerate or to die. Species exist and flourish now which are millions of years older than mankind. “The individual withers, the race is more and more.” The most conspicuously persistent of all races during the last two millenia, the Jews, have survived one empire after another of their oppressors, but have never had an empire of their own. Thus, so far as the historian is concerned, it is not races that die, but civilisations and empires. Plato’s analogy between the individual and the race is therefore irrelevant, as well as untrue. The fatalistic conception to which it tempts us, saying that races must die, just as individuals must, and that therefore it is idle to repine or oppose, is utterly unwarrantable, and extremely unhealthy. To take our own case, despite the talk about our own racial decadence, our babies still come into the world fit and strong and healthy. We kill them in scores of thousands every year, but this infant mortality is not a sign that the race is dying, but a sign that even the most splendid living material can be killed or damaged, if you try hard enough. The babies do not die because races are mortal, but because individuals are—and we kill them. The babies drink poison, eat poison, and breathe poison, and in due course die. The theory of racial senility, inapplicable everywhere because untrue, is most of all inapplicable here. If a race became infertile, Plato and Aristotle would be right. There is no such instance in history apart from well-defined external, *not inherent*, causes, as in the case of the Tasmanians. Dismissing this analogy, we may also dismiss, as based upon nothing better, the idea that the great tragedies of history

were necessary events at all. We must look elsewhere than amongst the inherent and necessary factors of racial life for the causes which determine these tragedies; and we shall be entitled to assume as conceivable the proposition that, notwithstanding the consistent fall of all our predecessors, these causes are not inevitable, but being external and environmental, may possibly be controlled.

The second of the two false interpretations of history in terms of biology is still, and always has been, widely credited. It is that, in consequence of success, a people become idle, thoughtless, unenterprising, luxurious; and that these *acquired characters are transmitted* to succeeding generations, so that finally there is produced a degenerate people unable to bear the burden of empire, and then the crash comes. The historian usually introduces the idea already dismissed, by saying that a "young and vigorous race" invaded the imperial territories, and so forth. The terms "young" and "old," applied to human races, usually mean nothing at all.

This doctrine of the transmission to children of characters acquired by their parents, is the explanation of organic evolution advanced by Lamarck rather more than a century ago. It is employed by historians for the explanation of both the processes they record, progress and retrogression. Thus they suppose that for many generations a race is disciplined, and so at last there is produced a race with discipline in its very bone; or for many generations a nation finds it necessary to make adventure upon the sea, and so at last there is produced a generation of predestined sailors with blue water in its blood. And, in similar terms, moral and physical retrogression or degeneration are explained.

Let us consider the contrast between the interpretation which accepts the Lamarckian theory of the transmission of acquired characters and that which does not. Consider the babies of a new generation. According to Lamarck, they have in their blood and brain the consequences of the habits of their ancestors. If these have been idle and luxurious, the new babies are predestined to be idle and luxurious too. This, in short, is a "dying nation." But, if acquired characters are not transmitted, the new generation is, on the whole, not much better, not much worse, than its predecessors, so far as this supposed factor of change is concerned. Each generation makes a fresh start, as we see in the babies of our slums to-day.

Lamarck's theory is discredited. The view of Mr. Francis Galton is accepted, that acquired characters are not transmitted, either for good or for evil. If there are no other factors of racial degeneration or racial advance, then races do not degenerate or advance, but make a fresh start every generation, and empires rise and fall without any relation to the breed of the imperial people—an incredible proposition.

Certain apparent though not real exceptions exist to the denial of the Lamarckian theory of the transmission of acquired characters.

These exceptions are furnished by what may be called the *racial poisons*. Alcohol, for instance, is a substance, certainly poisonous in all but very small doses, which is carried by the blood to every part of the body, and may and does injure *its racial elements*. Thus a true racial degeneration may be caused. Other poisons, such as those of certain *diseases*, act similarly.

We must therefore note, in passing, a biological factor of historical importance, hitherto scarcely recognised by historians. Certain of our diseases, and especially consumption or tuberculosis, are at present making history by their extermination of aboriginal races. Minute living creatures, which we call microbes, are introduced into the new and favourable environment constituted by the blood and tissues of human races hitherto unacquainted with them, and the consequences are known to all. But, further, it has lately been suggested as highly probable, by Professor Ronald Ross, that the fall of Greece, that incalculable disaster for mankind, was due to the invasion not of human foes, but of the humble living species which are responsible for the disease miscalled malaria. Malaria, like alcohol, produces true racial degeneration, its poisons affecting *those racial elements* of which the individual body, as biologically conceived by Weismann, is merely the ephemeral host—recalling the great line of Lucretius, “*Et quasi cursores, vitai lampada tradunt.*” To lame the runner is not to injure the torch he bears—acquired characters are not transmitted; but the racial poison makes dim the lamp ere he passes it on.

But, leaving poisons out of the question, races of men and animals *do* undergo change, progressive and retrogressive, in consequence of the action of another factor than that advanced by Lamarck; and this is the factor of “natural selection,” so termed by Charles Darwin in 1858, exactly half a century ago; or “survival of the fittest,” to use Herbert Spencer’s phrase. If, of any generation, individuals of a certain kind are chosen by the environment for survival and parentage, the character of the species will change accordingly. If what we call the best are chosen, their goodness will be transmitted in some degree, and the race will advance; if what we call the worst are chosen, their badness will be transmitted in some degree, and the race will degenerate.

Now in the case of all species other than man the only possible progress is this *racial or inherent progress*, which is dependent upon a choice or selection of the best for parents, and is comparable in some measure, as Darwin showed, with the change similarly produced by the selective breeding, or “artificial selection,” of the lower animals by man. But in the case of man himself, there is a wholly different kind of progress also attainable, which is not inherent or racial progress at all, but yet is real progress; and which has the most important relation to the inherent or racial progress that may be achieved by the process of natural selection, or the choice of parents. *The dis-*

inction between these two kinds of human progress is as cardinal as it is hitherto ignored.

It was said just now that acquired characters are not transmissible by heredity ; but man has learnt to circumvent the laws of heredity by transmitting his spiritual acquirements through language and art. Even before writing, there was tradition passed on from mouth to mouth. As long as man was speechless he advanced, I believe, no faster than other creatures—we know that he has an undistinguished past of some hundreds of thousands of years : but with speech and writing came the transmission of acquirements in this special sense. The past education of a mother will not enlarge her baby's brain, but she can teach her daughter what she has learnt, and so the child can, in a sense, begin where the parent left off—in analogy with what Lamarck wrongly imagined to be the case with the young giraffe, that was supposed to profit by the stretching of the parental necks. It is this transmission of spiritual acquirements—outside the germ-plasm, and notwithstanding its laws—that explains the amazing acquired progress of man in the last ten or twenty thousand years, as compared with three or perhaps five hundred thousand before them.

This kind of progress is peculiar to man ; it is the gift of intelligence, and it may be called *traditional or acquired progress*. It is an utterly different thing from *inherent or racial progress*, an improvement in the breed dependent upon the happy choice of parents. And it is surely evident that *acquired progress is compatible with inherent decadence*. To use Coleridge's image, a dwarf may see further than a giant if he sits on the giant's shoulders ; yet he is a dwarf, and the other a giant. Any schoolboy now knows more than Aristotle, and that is true progress of one kind, but the schoolboy may well be a dwarf compared with Aristotle, and may belong to a race degenerate when compared with his ; and that would be *inherent or racial decadence subsisting with acquired or traditional progress*.

Now whilst the accumulation of knowledge and art and invention from age to age is real progress, it evidently depends for its security upon the quality of the race. If the race degenerates—whether through a racial poison, alcohol or malaria, or through, say, the selection of the worst for parentage—the time will come when its heritage is too much for it. The pearls of the ancestral art are now cast before swine, and are trampled on ; statues, temples, books, are destroyed, or burnt, or lost. If an empire has been built, the degenerate race cannot sustain it. *There is no wealth but life ; and if the inherent quality of the life fails, neither battle-ships, nor libraries, nor symphonies, nor Free Trade, nor Tariff Reform, nor anything else, will save a nation*. Empires and civilisations, then, may have fallen, despite the strength and magnitude of the superstructure, because their living foundations became weak ; and the bigger and heavier the superstructure, the less could it survive the failure of the foundations. If the Fiji islanders degenerate, there is little consequence ; if the breed of

Romans degenerate, all their vast mass of acquired progress and power crushes them into dramatic ruin. Acquired progress will not compensate for racial or inherent decadence. If the race is going down, it will not compensate to add another dependency to your empire; on the contrary, the bigger the empire, the stronger must be the race; the bigger the superstructure, the stronger the foundations. Acquired progress is real progress, but it is always dependent for its maintenance upon racial or inherent progress—or, at least, upon racial maintenance.

It is submitted that civilisations and empires have succumbed because they represented only acquired or traditional progress; and this availed not at all when, for instance, the races that built them up began to degenerate. And, apart from the action of racial poisons, the only explanation of racial degeneration yet considered by the historians is the Lamarckian one of the transmission of acquired habits of luxury and idleness from parent to child: an explanation which the modern study of heredity empowers us to repudiate. What theory of this alleged degeneration is there to offer in its place? and especially what theory which explains racial degeneration amongst not the conquered but the conquerors, amongst the successful, the imperial, the cultured, the leisured—the well-catered-for in all respects, bodily and mental? *Why is it that not enslaved, but imperial peoples degenerate? Why is it that nothing fails like success?*

The true and sufficient answer has been given by no academic historian: but the clue to it was given half a century ago by the greatest historian of all time, Charles Darwin. The reason is that *no race or species, vegetable or animal or human, can maintain its organic level, let alone raise it, unless its best be selected for parentage.*

We know that, as individuals, we must struggle or we degenerate. “Work is the law,” as Ruskin said, whether for a livelihood or for enjoyment. Living things are the product of the struggle for existence: we are thus evolved strugglers by constitution; and directly we cease to struggle, we forfeit the possibilities of our birth-right. “Thou, O God,” said Leonardo, “hast given all good things to man at the price of labour.”

The case is the same with races or nations. Directly the conditions become too easy, selection ceases: it is as successful to be incompetent or lazy or vicious as to be worthy. The hard conditions that kept weeding out the unworthy are now relaxed, and the fine race they made goes back again. There even occurs the phenomenon of *reversed selection*, when it is positively fitter to be bad than good, cowardly than brave—as when religious persecution murders all who are true to themselves, and spares hypocrites and apostates; or when healthy children are killed in factories, or by their mother’s work in factories, whilst feeble-minded children or deaf-mutes are carefully tended until maturity and then sent into the world to reproduce their maladies. Under reversed selection such results are obtained as a

breeder of racehorses or plants would obtain if he went to work on similar lines; the race degenerates rapidly, and if it be an imperial race its empire comes crashing down about its ears. All empires and civilisations hitherto have involved the risk of partial or complete arrest or reversal of the process of natural selection; and, in the cases where their doom has been irretrievable, it is the racial degeneration so produced that has been its cause.

When a race is making its early way by force, as by incessant war, selection is stringent. The weak, cowardly, diseased, stupid, are ruthlessly expunged from generation to generation. As civilisation advances, a higher ethical level is reached—all true civilisation tending to abrogate and ameliorate the struggle for existence. The diseased and weakly and feeble-minded are no longer left to pay the penalty sternly exacted by Nature for unfitness: they are allowed to *survive*, which is well; and to *multiply*, which is ill. A successful race can apparently afford to permit this, as a race that is fighting for its existence cannot. *But in reality no race can afford this absolutely fatal process*; especially when unchallenged success comes, and even interferes with the natural process of selection to the extent of not merely abrogating, but actually reversing it, so that it may be more advantageous—more fit—to be a coward, or an idler, or diseased, or feeble-minded, than the reverse.

The fittest survive in any case; but fitness is not goodness. It may be, but it may be badness. Fitness is merely the capacity to fit—to fit the environment. That society in which it is fittest to be best is safe; that society in which it is equally fit to be good, bad, or indifferent is doomed; that society in which it is fittest to be worst is already damned. A nation will ascend, under the influence of selection which is such that the fittest selected are also the best; a nation will degenerate, under the influence of selection which is such that the fittest selected are also the worst. A nation will even degenerate if selection be merely abrogated, and universal survival or indiscriminate survival be substituted for any process of selection at all.

If a nation can ascend in any sure way (its surety being dependent upon the fact that the ascent is in the very blood of the people) only when natural selection actively operates in the choice of the best for survival and parentage, then we begin to realise why it is that in the whole course of history hitherto this sure ascent has scarcely been realised. Babylon may have lasted for 4000 years, as the historians tell us, yet at last it fell. If selection had been operating in Babylon throughout that time, choosing only the best, the noblest and the wisest, conferring upon them, and upon them alone, the supreme privilege and duty of parentage, could Babylon have fallen?

Hence the explanation of the truth expressed by Gibbon, “All that is human must retrograde if it do not advance.” Why should this be so? Why should it not be possible merely to maintain a

position gained? The answer is, that the civilisation which merely maintains its position is one in which selection has ceased; if selection had not ceased, the position would be more than maintained, there would be advance. But without selection the breed will certainly degenerate, the lower individuals multiplying more rapidly than higher ones, in accordance with Spencer's law that the higher the type of the individual the less rapidly does he multiply; and thus the race which is not advancing is retrograding, as Gibbon declared.

The selection of the best for parentage is the sole factor of inherent or racial progress; but the traditional or acquired progress, which we call civilisation, tends to thwart or abrogate or even invert this process. Thus the conditions necessary for the *secure* ascent of any race, an ascent secured in its very blood, made stable in its very bone, have not yet been achieved in history; *and this is the reason why history records no enduring empire.*

It is not for a moment asserted that there are no other causes of imperial failure than the arrest or inversion of selection. But if this is not the cause, then, in the absence of the transmission of acquired characters, the race has not degenerated, and is capable of reasserting itself. Only by the arrest or inversion of selection can a race degenerate—apart from alcohol and certain diseases. If, then, a civilisation or empire has fallen through causes altogether non-biological—through carelessness, or neglect of motherhood or alteration of ideals—the changes in character so produced are not transmitted to the children, and the race is not degenerate, but merely deteriorated in each generation.

For instance, we have been brought up to believe that there is no possible future for Spain—it is a dying nation, a senile individual, a people of degenerates; it has had its day, which can never return. The historian explains this by a fallacious use of the analogy between a race and an individual, and by the false Lamarckian theory of heredity. But the biologist believes that since Spain has not been subjected—or, at any rate, not subjected long enough—to the only process which can rapidly ensure real degeneration, viz. the consistent and stringent selection of the worst, she is yet capable of regeneration. Regeneration is not really the word, because there has been no real degeneration, but only the successive deterioration of successive and undegenerate generations.

If we took an animal species that *has* degenerated, such as the intestinal parasites, and endeavoured to regenerate them, we should begin to realise the magnitude of our task. That is not the task for Spain, the biologist asserts. Merely the environment must be altered—not the mountain ranges and the rivers, Buckle notwithstanding, but the really potent factors in the environment, the spiritual and psychical and social factors—and the deterioration of each new generation, inherently undegenerate, will cease.

And the biologist is right. The "dying nation" alters its psychical environment. It introduces the practice of education, it begins to shake off the yoke of ecclesiasticism; and what are the consequences?

The new generation is found to be potentially little worse, and little better, than its predecessors of the sixteenth century. There has been no racial degeneration. The environment is modified for the better, *i.e.* so as to choose the better, and Spain, as they say in misleading phrase, "takes on a new lease of life."

But the historian might well write a volume upon the same thesis as applied to China and Japan. The popular belief used to be, that China illustrated the so-called law of nations. It was the decadent, though monstrous, relic of an ancient civilisation; it had had its day; inevitable degeneration, which must befall all peoples, had come upon it. Behold it in the paralysis which precedes death!

But in the light of the facts of Japan, and such a phrase as "the yellow peril," we have discarded our old theories. The metaphor must be changed. This is not paralysis, but merely stupor. It is suspense, not recuperation; but assuredly it is not paralysis. Who now would dare to say that China has had its day, even if he still clings to the old fictions about Spain?

There is another factor of history to which, I believe, the biologist must attach enormous importance, but which no historian yet has adequately reckoned with. The prime assumption of this lecture from beginning to end, is that "there is no wealth but life;" and, in the attempt to suggest interpretations of history based upon this truth, so little recked of by the historian, we have considered the life in question from the point of view of its determination by heredity, and its varying value according to the inherent and transmissible characters selected for perpetuation in each generation. But a word must be said as to the other factor which, with heredity, determines the character of every individual—and that factor is the environment. We must note the most important aspect of the environment of human beings, and observe that historians hitherto have wholly ignored it; yet its influence is incalculable. This is motherhood.

It is man's intelligence that has made him lord of the earth; it is qualities of intelligence that have largely determined the course of history as wrought out between human races and civilisations. Now intelligence is a limitless thing—it can learn everything; *but*, it has everything to learn. The lower animals have instincts—neither needing nor capable of education, but in order that intelligence shall be possible, instinct must make room for it. Thus, at birth we human beings have nothing; intellect being only potential, not actual, and instinct having almost entirely lapsed. We come into

the world more helpless and incompetent than the young of any other living creature ; the human baby is a fraction more helpless even than the baby ape. A later age may reveal a Newton or a Kelvin, a Shakespeare or a Goethe ; but all were helpless ignorant babies at first, unable even to find their way to the mother's breast that was made for them. Thus motherhood, the importance of which has been steadily rising throughout the ages, and is enormous in all the mammals, is supremely important for the highest of the mammals, which is man. No motherhood, no intelligence. You may have the most perfect system of selection of the finest and highest individuals for parentage ; but the babies whose potentialities—heredity gives no more—are so splendid, are always, will be always, dependent upon motherhood. What was the state of motherhood during the decline and fall of the Roman empire ? This factor counts in history ; and will always count, so long as three times in every century the only wealth of nations is reduced to dust, and begins again in helpless infancy. As to Rome we know little, whatever may be suspected ; but we know that here, in the heart of the greatest empire in history—and it is at the heart that empires rot—thousands of mothers go out every day to tend dead machines, whilst their own flesh and blood, with whom lies the imperial destiny, are tended anyhow or not at all. To-day our historians and politicians think in terms of regiments, and tariffs, and “Dreadnoughts” ; the time will come when historians think in terms of babies and motherhood. We must think in such terms, too, if we wish Great Britain to be much longer great. A history of motherhood is yet to seek. Meanwhile, who will not deplore the perennial slaughter of babies in this land, the deterioration of many for every one killed outright, the waste of mothers' travail and tears ?

Had all Roman mothers been Cornelias, would Rome have fallen ? Consider the imitation mothers—no longer mammalia—to be found in certain classes to-day—mothers who should be ashamed to look any tabby cat in the face ; consider the ignorant and downtrodden mothers amongst our lower classes ; and ask whether these things are not making history. Who will join the new party of one that calls itself *maternalist* ?

These principles find their warrant and application in the unexampled riddle of the persistence and success, throughout more than two thousand years and a thousand vicissitudes, of the Jewish people. It is true that we have here no exception to the *apparent* law that empires are mortal, for there never was a Jewish empire ; the Jews were never subject to the risk involved for racial or inherent progress, by the possession of great acquired powers leading to the arrest of struggle and selection. But just as the fall of empires has often not been the fall of races—various races having at various times carried on the same imperial tradition—so the persistence of the Jews, as

contrasted with the impermanence of empires, has been the persistence of a race.

It has been asserted that that race of people decays in which selection ceases or is inverted; that in the absence of selection of the fittest for life and parentage, no species, vegetable, animal or human, can prosper, much less progress. Now the Jews, the one human race of which we know assuredly that it has persisted unimpaired, have been the most continuously and stringently selected of any race that can be named. Every measure of persecution and repression, practised against them by the peoples amongst whom they have lived, has directly tended towards the very end which those peoples least desired to compass. Other peoples found themselves prosperous through the efforts of their fathers; the struggle for existence abated; it was, so to say, as fit to be unfit as to be fit—with the inevitable result, racial decadence. But this has never been the case of the Jews. They have always had to struggle for life intensely, and their unexampled struggle has been a great source of their unexampled strength. The Jew who was a weakling or a fool had no chance at all; the weaklings and the fools being weeded out, intensity and strength of mind became the common heritage of this amazing people.

Secondly, there was everything to favour motherhood. Here religious precept and ethical tradition joined with stern necessity to the same end—the end which always meant a new and strong beginning for the next generation. Even to-day all observers are agreed that infant mortality is at a minimum among the Jews; their children are superior in height and weight and chest measurement, to Gentile children brought up amidst poverty far less intense in our own great cities—in *a better material environment, but a far inferior maternal environment*. The Jewish mother is the mother of children innately superior, on the average, since they are the fruit of such long ages of stringent parental selection; and she makes more of them because she fails to nurse them only in the rarest cases, when she has no choice, and because in every detail her maternal care is incomparably superior to that of her Gentile sister. Given a high standard of motherhood, in a highly selected race, what other result than that we daily witness and envy can we expect?

Thirdly, the Jews do not abuse alcohol; and thus avoid one of the few causes of true racial degeneration, apart from arrest of selection or selection of the worst, for parentage.

If these principles are valid, it is evident that our redemption from the fate of all our predecessors is to be found only in what Mr. Francis Galton calls eugenics—the selection of the best for parentage. The appropriateness of Mr. Galton's relation to this question is unmistakable. As advocate of the principle of selection, he is the cousin of Charles Darwin, and he is the author of the theory that acquired characters are not transmitted, and therefore that selection alone

changes races—that mere education is a Sisyphean task, which has to be done all over again from the beginning in each generation.

Using the word environment in its widest sense, including, for instance, public opinion—and its use in any sense less wide is always erroneous and misleading—we must surely see that it is our business to provide the environment which selects the best for parentage and discourages the parentage of the worst: say, to begin with, the deaf and dumb, the feeble-minded, the insane, the epileptic, the inebriate, those afflicted with hereditary disease of other kinds, and so forth. Our principles should enable us, also, to define what we mean by good environment. Comprehensive and indiscriminate charity means a good environment for many in a sense, but it may also mean the selection of the worst for parentage—e.g. the feeble-minded. This good environment, then, means the degeneration of the race. We must therefore *appraise environment in terms of its selective action*. A good environment is that which selects the good, and the best environment is that which selects the best; discovers them, makes the utmost of them, and confers upon them the supreme privilege and duty of parentage. That, and that alone, is the best environment; and all other moral judgments upon environment are fallacious, and will be disastrous.

The new law of love need not go, the brutal struggle for existence need not be restored, we need not be damned to be saved. *The unfit must survive, but they must not multiply*. We need only follow the Lancashire society which now cares for the feeble-minded *all their days*, and thus serves the present and the future simultaneously.

Eugenics, or “good breeding,” is Mr. Francis Galton’s name for the science of race-culture, which assumes that there is no wealth but life, and that the first duty of all governments and patriots, and good citizens is, to quote Ruskin again, “the production and recognition of human worth, the detection and extinction of human unworthiness.” The idea is not new-fangled, but was clearly laid down by Plato, and by Theognis two centuries before him. The modern expression of it is now nearly a quarter of a century old, and it has already passed the stage of ridicule, except by the ridiculous.

Eugenics is a project of the most elevated and provident morality, aiming at no object less sublime than the ennoblement of mankind; and if one may suggest its motto, it would be, *The products of progress are not mechanisms but men*. It aims at “working out the beast.” It is based upon the principle of the selection or choice of the superior for parentage, which has been the essential factor of all progress in the world of life, but which all civilisations have tended, in some degree, to abrogate, or even to invert—as when the feeble-minded child is cared for till maturity, and sent out into the world to produce its like, whilst healthy children are daily destroyed by ignorance and neglect.

I could not but inquire

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Why is this glorious creature to be found
One only in ten thousand? What one is,
Why may not millions be? What bars are thrown
By Nature in the way of such a hope?"

Consider how far we have come, the base degrees by which we
did ascend, and answer with Shakespeare, "There are many events in
the womb of Time which will be delivered."

[C. W. S.]

